

**MAKOWER, Helen (1910-1998)***Matthias Klaes\**

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Helen Makower, born 1 June 1910 in London, died 17 May 1998 (Marlborough, Wiltshire). Daughter of the avant-garde writer and music critic Stanley V. Makower. Educated at Bedales School and Newnham College Cambridge, M.A. (Oxon, inc.) 1938, Ph.D. in Economics (London School of Economics and Political Science) 1937.

After completing a Ph.D. thesis on 'The Theory of Value on the Capital Market' she joined the newly established Oxford Institute of Statistics under J. Marschak. During World War II, she formed part of the group of economists at Winston Churchill's Statistical Branch, and worked for the British Control Commission in Germany immediately after the war. After a brief spell as tutor at Somerville College Oxford, from 1946 to 1947, she moved on to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe under G. Myrdal in Geneva, to return to academia as a economics lecturer at the LSE in 1949. One year later, she was promoted to Reader in Economics (with special reference to International Trade), a post which she held until her formal retirement from academia in 1977. In 1967, she was decorated by the King of Greece for her efforts to help remote villages restore water supplies that had been destroyed in World War II.

As member of the Oxford Institute, she was at the forefront of efforts in British economics of the 1930s to join theoretical reasoning with formal statistical analysis. Her study with Marschak and H. W. Robinson (1938, 1939, 1940) on labour mobility constituted a pioneering contribution to regional economics. Joint work with Marschak (1938) maps out a research agenda for a portfolio choice approach to monetary theory which the discipline did not live up to until the advent of the general equilibrium models with transaction costs of the 1970s. War related research (Makower and Robinson 1939) was followed by an early analysis of consumer choice under a dual-currency regime (Makower 1945-46).

Due to her contacts to Marschak and the Cowles Commission at Chicago Makower acted as an important conduit to British economics of new techniques like activity analysis, stressing in particular the analogy between neoclassical consumer and production theory. Her 1957 book made linear programming accessible to a non-technical audience, and constitutes an early attempt at formulating a goods-characteristics approach to consumer theory (subsequently brought to fruition by K.J. Lancaster). Her work with G. Morton on the welfare effects of customs unions gained some influence in the Vinerian tradition leading up to the Kemp-Wan theorem. Helen Makower made significant contributions to modern economics, both independently and through her collaborative research. She regarded her development work in Greece as at least as important, and after retirement spent several years in East Asia as a Christian missionary.

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### Further Reading

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\*Full, revised and corrected version of an entry written for the Dictionary of British Economists, ed. D. Rutherford, vol. 2, Thoemmes, pp. 718-719. The online text, which is also available via the internet archive [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org), should be cited as the definite version, due to several factual errors in the dictionary entry which the publisher was not able to correct before going to print. The author is Professor of Commerce at Keele University and a specialist in contemporary history of economics. Contact via <http://mk.klaes.name>

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